PRESS RELEASE

GENERATIONS IN JAZZ FOUNDATION
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Acalanes Jazz Combo is Tops at Monterey;
Ellie Athayde is Musician of Year

The Acalanes High School Jazz Combo won top honors Saturday at the Monterey Jazz Festival's NeXT Generation youth jazz combo competition.

The five piece combo also took first place, in February, at the statewide Folsom Jazz Festival. This weekend's win at Monterey, however, was considered more important because the competition was broader and deeper, and included combos from all over the USA plus Japan and Australia. Indeed, the NeXT Generation Festival is considered, by some, to be the most important youth jazz competition in the world.

Acalanes' winning combo features Parker Grant (piano), Ben Ebert (percussion), Maxime Stinnett (saxophone), Gurbir Dhillon (saxophone), and Ellie Athayde (bass). The combo has performed together, in various permutations, for five years. The band is coached by legendary local jazz musician Mary Fettig.

After a raucous performance of three pieces, the Acalanes band was ecstatic to win top honors. As reward for their win, the combo will play on the main stage at the 2008 Monterey Jazz Festival on September 21.

Following the performance, Ellie Athayde was honored as the judges' first choice for favorite combo musician of the Festival. Gurbir Dhillon was also honored as one of three additional judges' choices. Those present in Monterey on Saturday, April 5th gave thunderous applause when Rob Klevan, Education Director of the Monterey Jazz Festival, made these announcements.

This 38th Annual Monterey Jazz Festival is special to Mary Fettig because she was in the winning band of the first competition in 1971, and she performed on the main stage of the Monterey Jazz Festival that September, as the Acalanes jazz combo will do this year. Since her first year as a student performer in 1971, she has performed

many times as a professional, and during the last 3 years, participated in the NeXt Generation Festival as a judge.

To honor the band, Mayor Mike Anderson and the Lafayette City Council have invited the combo to play their award-winning set to kick off the City Council meeting next Monday evening, April 14, 2008, at 7PM at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road. All are welcome to join the Generations in Jazz Foundation, the City of Lafayette, and the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce at this event.

Jazz music is integral to the Lafayette community. Hundreds of young musicians are introduced to this uniquely American art form each year at Stanley Middle School by instructor Bob Athayde. These students progress through three extracurricular jazz bands at Stanley before matriculating to either Acalanes or Campolindo High School, both of which have exceptionally strong jazz programs.

In February, the Acalanes High School Jazz Band, led by Rick Meyer, was awarded first place for their division at the statewide Folsom Jazz Festival. This followed their statewide victory at the same festival in 2007.

Lafayette's jazz music culture is also nurtured by Lafayette's Generations in Jazz Foundation and by members of the Rossmoor Big Band. "GenJazz" was founded almost ten years ago with the sole purpose to place youth jazz players in a performance setting with experienced musicians from earlier generations. GenJazz is affiliated with the Rossmoor Big Band, and also sponsors Lafayette's annual week-long Summer Jazz Music Workshop. Hundreds of students attend the Workshop each summer and are treated to instruction by some of the nation's top jazz players.

For more information, contact Mo Levich at 925-284-0961 or Steven Falk at 925-284-1968.

Quotes:

"If you haven't heard the Acalanes Jazz Combo, you must find a way to do so. Their playing is masterful; it is nothing short of astonishing."

--Tom Carter, President Generations in Jazz Foundation

"Can they play? Yes, they can play! But not only can they play, but they're also great students and generous people. They represent the very best of the Lafayette youth community."

--Steven Falk, Lafayette City Manager

"I can't wait to hear this band at our Council meeting on Monday night! I'm all jazzed up about it!"

--Michael Anderson, Mayor, City of Lafayette

"I can't talk now because [sniff] I'm still crying after having listened to the award winning set. Does anybody have a package of tissues I can borrow?"

--Mo Levich, Director, Rossmoor Big Band